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PUBLIC ROLES, PRIVATE ROLES, AND THE
QUESTION OF 'SOUTH AFRICAN INVESTMENTS'

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ABSTRACT

Should the trustees of educational institutions sell their investments in companies doing business in South Africa? Discussions of this question have tended to generate more heat than light, partly because role expectations for trustees are not well defined but also because the differences between public and private roles are not well understood. In both of these respects the question of South African investments is typical of many of the moral problems that arise in periods of rapid social change. An analysis of some of the concepts underlying this disagreement should therefore have a wider relevance. Accordingly, in the first three sections of this paper the kinds of situations which are likely to be morally problematic are redefined in terms of conflicts over role expectations, especially conflicts between expectations for private and for public roles. In the last section of the paper the distinctions introduced in the first three sections are applied to the question of South African investments. Though it is not to be expected that this analysis will dissolve the disagreement over divestment, disputants may at least learn what it is that they are disputing about.

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W. T. Jones

A dean of Balliol College, Oxford, in the years just after World War I, is said to have enlivened long winter evenings by leading a coterie of undergraduate friends in raids on the rooms of other undergraduates whom he and they disliked; on mornings after these forays he would summon the offenders to his office and fine them heavily for having damaged college property. If this dean is not apocryphal he had an astonishing capacity for confusing social roles. As dean he should not have incited undergraduates; as friend, he might. As friend he should not have fined undergraduates; as dean he must. But apocryphal or not, the story points up a central feature of many moral problems: the difficulty of deciding which of several possible social roles is most appropriate in a particular set of circumstances.

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An example of this difficulty is a monarch who wishes to marry a divorcee. A second example is a lawyer who learns that one of his partners is an embezzler.¹ A third is the faculty member of a tenure review committee who is a close personal friend of the individual under review. The roles differ in these three cases, but they have a common feature: each is an instance of a conflict between a (relatively) public and a (relatively) private role. And though there can certainly be conflicts between the expectations of two public roles and those of two private roles, one of the most interesting kind of conflict is one between public and private roles, where the conflict is due less to objective complexities than to a failure to take into account the differences between public and private roles. Since, for reasons I will discuss later, I think that this failure is a typically modern -- not to say typically late twentieth-century -- confusion, I shall devote the two central sections of this paper to pointing up the distinctions between public and private roles. But I shall begin with a discussion of the relations, generally, between role expectations and moral choices, and I shall conclude the paper with an application of this analysis to a matter of current concern, the investments that many American colleges and universities hold in companies doing business in South Africa.

I

Role Expectations and Moral Choices

What is the link between role, a sociological concept, and duty, an ethical concept? I believe that Hume's analysis of the idea

of natural necessity can be extended to the idea of duty, or moral necessity. According to Hume, the:

idea of a necessary connexion among events arises from a number of similar instances which occur of the constant conjunction of these events. . . . But there is nothing in a number of instances, different from every single instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar; except only, that after a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant. . . .²

If I release a rock which I have been holding in my hand, there is no reason why it should fall; it might just as well, as far as the nature of things goes, fly upward into the air or burst out singing "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me." But as a matter of fact, it has never leapt into air or burst into song; it has always fallen. Because it has always fallen, I expect it to fall on the next similar occasion, and I mistakenly attribute my expectation — which is only a subjective feeling in me — to a natural necessity in the physical world. The so-called laws of physics (e.g., the law of gravity) thus dissolve into observed regularities to which we have attached a feeling of expectation. This expectation, "which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant," is the sole source of "the idea of power or necessary connexion."³

So far Hume. A similar account can be given of moral laws and moral necessity. The duty we feel to perform such-and-such acts does not arise from the nature of those acts, for any frequently repeated act will come to be experienced as entailing an obligation to perform it. Rather, it arises from the fact that the act in question has been repeated so often that we have come to count on it's being performed again in similar circumstances.

As an example, consider a young king who has come to the throne after the long reign of an autocratic father. Uncertain who will best serve him as his ministers, he seeks, and accepts, the advice of his privy council. This creates an expectation, however slight, on the part of the privy councillors that they will be consulted regarding the next vacancy in the ministry. Perhaps it also creates a slight expectation on the part of the young king that he will again consult them. If he does so, this strengthens both the councillors' and the king's expectations that the council will be consulted. In due course, what was initially experienced merely as an expectation of future behavior comes to be experienced, merely because the expectation has been repeatedly satisfied, as the king's duty — not merely something that he does but something that he ought to do.

Thus defeated expectations regularly generate moral indignation. And if the king has internalized these expectations he will feel the same weight of moral censure (self blame), whenever he fails to consult his councillors, that his councillors level against him. Moral censure and self-blame operate powerfully to induce the

king to satisfy, and in satisfying to strengthen, the councillors' expectations, and eventually the practice of consultation will be incorporated in the constitution of the kingdom. Now it becomes enforceable by legal sanctions, in addition to the merely suasive force of social disapproval. It is practice, then, and the expectations arising from practice that make it morally binding on the young king to consult his privy council. His autocratic father certainly never did, and nobody so much as dreamed that he ought to. And in neighboring kingdoms no such constitutional provision exists or is thought of.

These remarks apply generally. Every social role (e.g., that of king or privy councillor) consists in a set of specific behavioral responses ($R_1, R_2, R_3 \dots$) in specific social circumstances ($C_1, C_2, C_3 \dots$). What the specific response in any specific circumstance is, depends on a variety of factors (e.g., the age, temperament and experience of the agent). But the occurrence of response R_1 , whatever it happens to be, in circumstance C_1 , creates, both in the agent and in those with whom he is interacting, a slight expectation that when C_1 recurs he will again do R_1 . Every repetition of R_1 in C_1 strengthens this expectation. Strong expectations regarding behavioral responses in social situations thus come to be experienced as morally compelling, just as expectations generated by repeated occurrences of natural events come to be experienced as physically necessary. But the necessity -- physical in the case of natural events; moral in the case of social behaviors -- is not in the events or the behaviors. They are just what they are. The necessity in both

cases is something "we feel in the mind" as a result of the regularities we have observed.

This way of describing the relation between role expectations and duty will be resisted by those who want to hold that some acts are "right" (absolutely right) and others "wrong" (wrong under any and all circumstances). It is of course a psychological fact, these critics will say, that people tend to feel obliged to do what they and others have come to expect them to do, but that is irrelevant to the question whether they are really obliged. The account given in the last few pages overlooks the all-important difference between feeling obliged and being obliged. Consider the following example. Suppose that Germany had won World War II, as it very nearly did. The Nazi practice of exterminating Jews and other "racially inferior" peoples would then have become universal; it would have been taught in schools, preached from pulpits, disseminated by the media, and enforced by law. In such circumstances people would undoubtedly come to believe they had a duty to exterminate Jews. Surely, I will be asked, you don't maintain that, in these circumstances, they would be really obliged to exterminate Jews? Isn't it evident that, despite their own and other people's expectations for them, they still have a duty not to exterminate Jews?

This is a powerful, indeed an unanswerable, counter-example as long as we exempt ourselves from the supposed universality of the Nazi system and so, unobserved even by ourselves, survive to condemn that system from the point of view of our own different expectations. Thus it is with us as it was with those unobserved observers of their own

death whom Lucretius wrote about. In a well-known passage in the de Rerum Natura Lucretius asks how people who are convinced of the mortality of the soul can yet fear death. The reason, he says, is that they "do not remove and cast themselves root and branch out of life, but all unwittingly suppose something of themselves to live on." Thus, conjuring up pictures of their dead bodies "mangled by birds and beasts, they pity themselves."⁴

So we unwittingly falsify the conditions specified in the counter-example. Because the Nazi system stands condemned even when it seems to have become universal and every different expectation has been eliminated, we conclude that it must be condemned by an objective and eternal moral order; we overlook the fact that we have not eliminated ourselves and that it is we and our own expectations who are condemning it. In a word, the universal Nazi system of the counter-example is not universal as long as we reject it; if it were to become truly universal, the question of condemnation would be moot; it could not arise.

Our belief in the eternity and objectivity of some (any) system of expectations is a function of our allegiance, our commitment, to that system, one more example of our tendency to project something we feel in the mind out into the world as a part of the nature of things. This explains why the counter-example seems at first sight so powerful; but its power is that of emotion, not of logic: it is simply a reflection of our horror at anti-semitism. The horror we feel causes us to reject the thought — to refuse even to imagine the possibility — that the Nazi system of expectation could

ever supercede our own. But of course we know, if only we can bring ourself to acknowledge the knowledge, that in the immense sweep of human history and in the immense variety of human societies many different systems of expectations have existed, and that to these different systems different people at different times have made commitments, and experienced ontological confusions, identical with our own.

Even in the same society at different times, different responses come to be associated with a particular role and are so experienced as obligatory. The expectations attached to particular roles therefore vary enormously; what is common to all roles is the effect of habit, by means of which an is (what is expected) is transformed into an ought (what ought to be done). In this way, in the course of time, systems of rights, claims, and obligations develop — all because men and women are creatures of habit. But men and women are not completely creatures of habit. Morals are problematic precisely because of the tension between these two facts about human nature.

Generally speaking, moral problems arise in the following kinds of circumstances.

(1) Many of the expectations for most social roles, whether public or private, are well defined. Roger of Mortemer must have known pretty well what was expected of him as a trusted vassal of William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy; he must have also known what was expected of him as a vassal of Ralph of Crépy, Count of Amiens. Though his obligations to these two lords did not necessarily

conflict, they chanced to collide at the battle of Mortemer in 1054, when Roger, who was a general in William's army, took Ralph, who was serving in the French army, prisoner. What to do? He sheltered Ralph for three days and then returned him to the French side.⁵

This probably appeared to Roger as a conflict between the expectations of two private roles. In modern times roles of this kind have been shifted to the public domain (as with the conflict experienced by Robert E. Lee and other officers in the U.S. Army between their duty to their state and their duty to the United States). A more typical example, from today's perspective, of a conflict between private roles would be the problem a woman might experience in balancing the claims of her mother and of her daughter. Conflicts are also possible between a public role and a private role. For instance, one knows what is expected of one as a member of a tenure review committee; one also knows what is expected of one as a friend — at least one knows what this friend expects of one, for he has taken care to make it plain. One's problem, if one believes the friend to be unqualified, is whether to act in one's role as friend or in one's role as faculty member. These are all conflicts between what we may call two "prima facie" duties⁶ — duties generated by the different expectations of the two roles, and one has to decide which of these two prima facie duties has the stronger claim.

(2) A second kind of moral problem may arise when a conflict between two prima facie duties has been resolved, but one now experience a conflict between what is perceived to be the more pressing of the two duties and what is felt to be an interest. One

can perfectly well know what is expected of him (and what he expects of himself) in these circumstances, and yet fail to do it.

St. Paul's lament -- "I can will but cannot do what is right. I do not do the good things that I want to do; I do the wrong things that I do not want to do. . . . What a wretched man I am!"⁷ -- is not often heard nowadays, sin having been secularized into psychosis, but the form of the conflict has not changed. Moral problems of this type are by no means rare.

(3) Can there also be a conflict between what is experienced as an unqualified duty and some role expectation? Many philosophers would answer affirmatively. To them it seems entirely possible that there can be a conflict between what they call a moral principle (such as the principle that human life ought to be preserved) and some role into which one has been cast (service in the army as a draftee) or for which one has deliberately opted (judge, surgeon).

This is only another version of the contention, which we have already examined,⁸ that the whole content of the notion of duty cannot be captured by the concept of role expectation, but it requires a somewhat different reply. I believe that a moral principle is simply an expectation that has been artificially abstracted from all of the roles in which it is actually embedded. Behaviors that are specific to one and only one role (such as the behavior in a certain kind of constitutional monarchy of consulting one's privy council) are not likely to be abstracted from the role, but behaviors that are expected in many different roles are likely to be abstracted and considered apart from any and all roles; they then seem to be universally binding

expectations, role-transcendent expectations, as it were.

It is possible, then, to account for why people come to think in terms of moral principles, just as it is possible to account for why they tend to attribute a special, "objective" status to their own system of expectations. Further, it is worth pointing out that thinking about a certain subset of expectations as having the status of moral principles has a very grave disadvantage. Because these expectations have been abstracted from their concrete settings in specific roles, they seem to have an obligatory force that puts them in opposition to, and gives them a moral priority over, any and all of the roles in which these expectations are actually embedded. Ordinary people -- and Aristotle -- recognize that the philosophers' moral principles are context-relative. People who would not think of lying in one social context lie freely in another, and without experiencing moral qualms when they do. But to say that truth-telling and promising-keeping and the other so-called moral principles are context-relative is to put them back into the varied roles from which the philosophers have abstracted them: it is to say that people commonly take into account the specific social role they happen to be performing at the time they find they have to choose between lying and telling the truth.

Putting the matter in this way does not mean that an agent -- a corporation executive, a university president, a locksmith -- who is confronted with a choice between lying and telling the truth may not face a real moral problem. But it is not the problem that it appears to be as long as we allow ourselves to talk the language of moral

principles. It is no longer the Pauline (or Freudian) problem of weakness of will, with role replacing interest as the rival to duty. It is not, that is to say, the problem of choosing between a universal principle ("preserve human life") and a role (surgeon). It is the problem of defining the role of surgeon with precision or, alternatively, of deciding whether a well-defined role needs redefinition -- it is the problem, for instance, of determining whether the role of surgeon permits, or even requires, a performer in this role on occasion to take a human life (a senile patient in great pain? a fetus that is the outcome of a rape?). This way of putting the matter dissolves the problem of a possible conflict between a moral principle and a role into one or the other of the two problems I next deal with.

(4) It might be thought, now that we have eliminated the possibility of a conflict between a moral principle and a role, that a moral agent has no problem at all if the role is well-defined and if he has fully internalized the role requirements. Then, it would seem, one knows what one ought do, i.e., what behaviors are expected of one, and one has come to expect these behaviors of oneself. There are in all societies at all times powerful forces promoting internalization: public opinion communicated in sermons and editorials and by a thousand other means; regulations promulgated by various professional organizations -- bar associations, medical associations and the like; procedural rules formulated for an organization's employees by its management; the decisions of courts backed by legal sanctions.

When all these voices are unanimous -- and for certain ranges of behavior they practically are -- how is it possible for a moral agent to view his situation as problematic? Well, a scrupulous man may always ask himself whether the rule, however strongly reinforced, quite fits the facts of the present case. Though one can of course always take the easy way out by doing punctiliously no more and no less than what is expected, sometimes one may just possibly want to take a closer look.

However, those who want to take a closer look will also want to avoid the possibility of finding themselves, like Milton's fallen angels, in wandering mazes lost. If formalism can be a vice, so, clearly, thinking too precisely on the event is a vice. The art of being moral -- and it is an art -- involves among other things the kind of sensitivity that can distinguish cases that deserve a closer look from those that do not; it is the art of being scrupulous, but also of being scrupulous about when to be scrupulous.⁹

(5) This sort of moral problem -- the problem of deciding when to be scrupulous and how scrupulous to be -- is different again from the problem that arises when one finds oneself in a situation which is not covered by any well-defined set of expectations.

The behavioral alternatives one is considering -- the options before one -- lie in a vagueness band, a band that results from the fact that, just at this point, society is not speaking unanimously but with several, perhaps many, different voices. This fifth kind of problem may occur at any time, for no role can ever be so exhaustively spelled out as to cover all possible cases. But in periods in which

roles are changing rapidly because the social context is fluid, this becomes the chief moral problem, and it is a cognitive problem: it is not the problem of bringing oneself to do what one knows one ought to do; it is the problem of coming to see what it is that one ought to do.

Upper middle class American parents in the last decades of this century know much of what is expected of them, and what they expect of themselves, as parents. Thus they are expected, and expect, to support their children through infancy and childhood, and up to the limits of financial capacity. But what is financial capacity, and how is it related to the quality of education and care that parents are expected, and expect, to furnish? In every social role there is a vagueness band between the kinds of conduct "everybody" agrees are expected of actors in that role (for instance, upper middle class parents are expected to support their children through high school) and the kinds of conduct that "everybody" agrees are not expected of actors in that role (parents are not expected to support adult children indefinitely in idleness).

Further, of course, role expectations change over time, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, and people differ a great deal in the speed and ease of their adjustment to these changes. This produces another vagueness band -- a temporal vagueness band. At a given point in time everybody agrees that such-and-such behaviors are no longer (or not yet) expected of them. But with respect to still other behaviors there will be disagreement as to whether they are now expected.

When, for instance, did parents cease to believe that they were expected to protect teenage daughters from sexual adventures? But however rapidly this change occurred, there was for most parents a period of uneasiness regarding what society expected of them, and what they expected of themselves, with respect to this matter. And in some regions of the country and for some social classes this uneasiness persists, exacerbated by the fact that the parents' expectations regarding protection almost certainly differ from the expectations of their teenage daughters. In none of these vagueness bands does one receive decisive guidance, either in the form of a social consensus or in the form of a court ruling or other explicit regulation. Instead, many different voices speak, and one of these voices is one's own. Unfortunately for those who are made anxious by uncertainty, especially by moral uncertainty, these vagueness bands are often wide.¹⁰

An individual in such a situation, whether he be anxious or not, wants to remove the present case from the vagueness band in which it now lodges. But he does not yet know in which direction to move it, inasmuch as in some respects it is like those cases to which it is agreed the role applied and yet in other respects like those cases to which it is agreed the role does not apply. He does not lack guidance; indeed, he may have more guidance than he knows what to do with. The guidance takes the form of calling his attention to similarities between this ambiguous case and clear-cut, obvious cases, but unfortunately since different guidance calls attention to different clear-cut cases, his problem is to decide which of the

similarities is most similar. For this he needs, above all good antennae, that is, an ability to distinguish between important and trivial differences.

Differences that are important for one society will of course be trivial for another, but for the moment let us focus on the capacity to notice small differences -- differences which others, with less sensitive antennae, have overlooked but which, once noticed, they recognize to be important. Emma Woodhouse was one who had successfully internalized the role expectations for an early nineteenth century English gentlewoman; she perceived herself as -- indeed, she was -- a lady. When she poked rather cruel fun at poor, defenseless Miss Bates, Mr. Knightley, whose antennae were much more sensitive than Emma's, pointed out to her the disparity between her chosen role and her behavior on this occasion: "I cannot see you acting wrong, without a remonstrance. How could you be so unfeeling to Miss Bates? How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation? -- Emma, I had not thought it possible." Though Emma "tried to laugh it off, . . . she was most forcibly struck. The truth of his representation there was no denying. She felt it at her heart."¹¹ The result was a very considerable modulation of Emma's perception of the role of a lady; and young lady readers of the novel might -- who knows? -- incorporate this fictional modulation in their real-life behavior toward the real-life Miss Bates of their acquaintance.

In any strongly segmented society a mark of good breeding -- that is to say, of the qualities needed to rise -- has always been the

ability to differentiate minutely. Thus the Duchesse de Guermantes distinguished within the aristocracy, which to outsiders seemed an undifferentiated class, between the old and the new, between the pre-revolutionary nobility and the parvenu, Napoleonic creations. She would never think of calling on the Princesse d'Irène, whose family, she remarked, was so absurdly "called after a bridge."

Marcel for his part had laboriously to learn modulations that were second nature to the Duchess. "The Duchesse de Guermantes, who had waved me so effusively a greeting with her gloved hand at the Opéra-Comique, had appeared furious when I bowed to her in the street." Yet — this is the present point — Marcel did learn; he improved his antennae: when at a garden party he caught the Duke's eye, the latter being in conversation with the Prince of Wales, he did not approach as he would have done in less exalted circumstances; he won the Duke's approval by bowing from a distance and passing on.¹²

Today such modulations as these, and the differentiations in the environment to which they were responsive will be viewed as trivial. I have chosen them precisely because they seem trivial -- to reinforce the point that there is no fundamental difference between trivial modulations and important modulations -- no difference, that is, between the ways in which trivial and important modulations are introduced, no difference in the ways in which they become established, if indeed they become established; no difference in the ways in which they disappear, as all modulations, whether trivial or important, eventually do.

How, then, does one distinguish between important and trivial modulations? The answer is that time will tell and that only time will tell; the test is the test of survival. A modulation may disappear as soon as it is introduced — the introducer himself may not like the look of it when he sees it in action, or he may retreat from the hostility of moral conservatives who hold, with the Harry Claverings of every generation in every society, that "No man has a right to be peculiar. Every man is bound to accept such usage as is customary in the world."¹³ Other modulations take on -- because they call people's attention to aspects of the situation that, now that they attend to them, seem to be relevant.¹⁴ These modulations become a part of the culture and are now defended as correct usage by all the Harry Claverings who, earlier, had condemned them as deviations.

Modulations obviously have more staying power when they are reinforced by the sanctions of courts and self-regulating bodies. But no such sanctions are likely to be introduced — still less to be sustained — unless they are based on already achieved, spontaneous consensuses. Thus the key element in moral change is always a decision by some morally sensitive individual — an individual who, having detected a failure of fit between an existing role expectation and the situation in which he now has to act, modulates the role accordingly.¹⁵ The spread of a modulation through a society, prior to its codification in institutional and legal forms, is quite like the spread of an esthetic innovation -- a new style in art or in music. If the modulation, whether moral or esthetic, takes on, we may be sure that it has brought into focus some aspect of people's experiential

field that is important to them and that was missed in the earlier, unmodulated formulation.

Thus living morally -- that is, living well -- depends on learning to adjust roles to each other and role expectations to changing circumstances as we come to see their relevance or as they are shown to us by others. Here, if Aristotle did not say it all, as usual he said most of it:

Any one can get angry -- that is easy -- or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not . . . easy . . . to determine by reasoning . . . ; such things depend on particular facts, and the decision rests with perception.¹⁶

II

Private Roles

So much in general for the relation between role expectations and moral choice, which, I have emphasized, is intrinsically problematic. Save in an ant-like society of robots there will never be universal agreement about what, exactly, is expected of one in any particular, concrete situation; even baboons, one gathers, have to deal with, and resolve, moral choices. But today the moral life, already sufficiently problematic, is made more, and unnecessarily, problematic by a currently widespread tendency to conflate -- at least to slur over the difference between -- public and private roles.

People who act, and expect others to act, in public roles as if these were private roles and people who act, and expect others to act in private roles as if these were public roles, will never agree about what our duty is.

This said, the next thing to be said is that, though there are indeed fundamental differences between public and private roles, especially if one thinks of ideal typical cases, actual roles fall into a spectrum ranging from those that are very private (e.g., friend, lover), to those that, though still private, take on some of the aspects of public roles (husband, wife, parent, child, teacher, pupil), to those that are fully public (president of a corporation, air controller, chief petty officer). The third thing to be said is that the locus of a role on this spectrum -- the point on the spectrum at which a role is perceived to be located when it is well performed -- varies with the varying perspectives of those making judgments about how roles ought to be played out.

Let us list some of the features of obviously private roles -- that is, roles that "everybody" would locate towards the private end of the spectrum. (1) The more private a private role is the less it looks like a role; it is rather a relationship that is personal and so unique. Thus the paradigmatically private role is that of lover or friend, rather than husband or wife. Lovers and friends do indeed have expectations of each other -- expectations that may or may not be realized. However, the expectations of each pair of lovers, each pair of friends, are peculiar to this pair, not generalizable across pairs, even in the same social class and the same culture. Each pair has its

own flavor, its own tone, and its life is the living out of this flavor, this tone. This feature is especially marked in the kind of friendship Aristotle called the friendship of the good. Friendships of utility and of pleasure, in contrast, though each may develop its own flavor, are formed only because each party to the friendship knows what is expected of him and what he hopes to gain, and such friendships last only as long as these expectations are satisfied.

As for marriage, it is true of course that each married pair has expectations that are unique to that pair; each marriage has its own flavor, good or bad. To that extent marriage is a private role sustained less by expectations satisfied than by the perceptions the married pair have of each other. But marriage is also an institution sanctioned by the state and maintained by a consensus that defines society's expectations for marriage. To that extent marriage is a public role.

Romantic marriages are marriages based chiefly or even exclusively on an experienced flavor, and they endure only as long as the flavor lasts; when divorce is imminent we can see the private morality of such marriages turning into public morality. Commercial marriages are marriages of convenience. The morality of such marriages is public from the start, though they may, as time goes on, acquire a tone of their own and so move in the direction of private morality.

People vary -- and cultures vary -- about where on this spectrum between romance and commerce they think a good marriage is likely to be located. Jane Austen thought that purely romantic

marriages were a disaster. Purely commercial marriages were hardly within her ken; we must go to Dickens or Thackeray or Trollope for an assessment of those -- Lizzie Greystock's marriage to Lord Eustace and Julia Brabazon's marriage to Lord Ongar were as disastrous, in Trollope's view, as any of the romantic elopements that offended Jane Austen's expectations for marriage. In this century -- indeed, in the last few decades -- there has been a very massive shift of the perceived locus of a "good" marriage, a shift toward the romantic, or private, end of the spectrum. The current view has moved so far that, as a result of a kind of perspective foreshortening, the kinds of marriage that the nineteenth century held to be eminently sound are now lumped together with the kinds which that century condemned as merely commercial.

(2) Roles are private not only to the extent that the expectations in which they consist are individuated to the persons concerned but also to the extent that these expectations are less that such-and-such behaviors be forthcoming in such-and-such circumstances than that the behaviors, whatever they be, are expressive of the attitudes animating the actors in this relationship.¹⁷ Alternatively, we can say that a role is private to the extent that the behaviors in which the role consists are symbolic of the special flavor of this relationship, rather than recognized means to agreed-on ends. In private roles gestures -- facial expression, tone of voice, bodily movements -- are more important for what they reveal (or conceal) than for the results they achieve.

(3) Roles are private to the extent that they are not clearly specified, ex ante expectations that the role players explicitly accept on entering the role. Rather, private roles grow and develop over time, within very loose and unspecified parameters. And they do not end briskly, with a bang, when one role player finds the other not living up to his expectations. They fade away as the relationship loses its flavor. This characteristically happens when the gestures come to be perceived as dishonest, as no longer revelatory of real feelings.

(4) Private roles are organic patterns, whose end is this pattern itself, rather than aggregations of components combined into this role only because they subserve the external goal that this aggregation is expected to achieve.

(5) Private roles are essentially limited to face-to-face, one-to-one relationships. A group (e.g., of friends) will consist of a set of more or less overlapping dyadic relationships. Such a group may even have a structure, but it will be a loose, fluid, horizontal structure that results from the fact that every individual in the group stands in a dyadic relationship to several group members.

So much for the leading features of private roles. Private morality has an undeniably great appeal — an appeal so strong that many people treat all roles as private roles. That is, they view all social relations whatever as relations between private individuals: their expectations for the roles that I shall be characterizing as public are what they would be if these roles were truly private.

One of the most moving — and certainly the best known — version of this view is contained in the sayings of Jesus as they are recorded in the New Testament. If we love God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves we will never go wrong in particular concrete situations. Rules prescribing correct interpersonal expectations are therefore not only not needed; they are positively a hindrance to living morally. It has sometimes been argued that Jesus' specific injunctions -- turn the other cheek, judge not, love your enemies -- are examples of an "interim morality" -- they have been thought to reflect his belief that the end of the world was imminent. It is possible, however, that they reflect instead his sense that in private relationships the symbolic aspect of an action as revealing a state of mind is more important than its effect on the external state of affairs. Thus Jesus may have urged his followers to take no thought for the morrow, not because he believed they would have no time in which to calculate, but because he held calculation to be inappropriate in those human relationships that are based on love rather than on benefits to be received and given in return. Presumably Jesus would have allowed that some human relations must be based on a calculus of benefits -- he did say that we are to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But, save for this enigmatic remark, he ignored public morality; it was simply not worth thinking about.

Kant's Critique of Practical Reason is another locus classicus for private morality; indeed, his aim may be said to have been to convert Jesus' version of private morality into a formal theory.

Unfortunately, private morality does not lend itself very readily to this kind of translation; in private morality it is the spirit that counts, not the architectonic. Thus Kant's absolutely universal, absolutely binding categorical imperatives are inappropriate in the domain of private morality. What matters to people engaged in living out some private role is that their partners' truth-telling or promise-keeping is an expression of a loving heart, not a possibly reluctant response to the stern voice of duty.

Kant evinced about as little interest in public morality as Jesus did. It is true that his categorical imperatives do set up standard expectations that can be counted on if everyone always does his duty. They thus have one feature -- predictability -- that is important in the domain of public morality. But unfortunately these categorical imperatives are impractical. What public morality requires are those "hypothetical" imperatives which Kant rejected as having nothing whatsoever to do with morality.

More illuminating of the essence of private morality than Kant's formal theory is an event in his old age. Very frail, almost senile, near to death, he tottered to his feet when his physician entered his room and refused to seat himself until the visitor had taken a chair. The physician protested; Kant replied, "The feeling for humanity has not yet left me."¹⁸ Kant was not then acting in response to some categorical imperative. He was making a symbolic gesture that expressed the passion of a feeling heart.

III

Public Roles

What are features of roles that lead one to locate a role up toward the public end of the spectrum of roles, and how does this affect one's view of what it is to play that role well, i.e., morally? (1) Just as the more private a private role is the less it looks like a role, so the more public a public role is, the more it looks like -- in fact, is -- a role. The more, that is, it is a set of standard expectations fixed in advance for the role players, rather than created by them in the process of acting out the role. Thus the paradigmatically public role is a Weberian slot in some large bureaucracy, defined in such a way that everybody who meets a certain level of competence can perform equally well in the role. Ideally, role players in public roles come and go unnoticed; arrivals and departures do not affect the execution of the role. This contrasts with private roles, where the individual performer not only makes a difference, but makes the whole difference. A friendship of the good disintegrates with the disappearance of one friend, and even in the most commercial of marriages the departure of an old husband (or wife) and the arrival of a new one is usually noticed.

Of course, the ideal of the totally replaceable performer is never realized. In even the most routinized of roles -- e.g., execution of an assembly-line task or of the manual of arms -- performances vary a bit from individual performer to individual performer, as foremen and drill sergeants know to their sorrow. Further, the higher a slot is in any hierarchy of bureaucratically

defined slots, the more that role, whilst remaining a public role, takes on some of the features of a private role. At the highest levels -- president, prime minister, general officer commanding -- individual style makes a great difference. Think of Hoover and Roosevelt, Chamberlain and Churchill, MacArthur and Marshall.

But however individualized the performance of a public role may be, the expectations for public roles are always spelled out for the performer in advance by a constitution or by some other document, and the ultimate measure of role playing is not style but how well the role player manages to fulfill those expectations. What one chiefly admires in the playing out of a role that one takes to be private is grace; what one chiefly admires in the playing out of a role that one takes to be public is effectiveness.

(2) Public roles are less free than private roles in the sense that the performer of a public role has an obligation to the organization of which that role is a part to do the best for that organization that he can. Not that performers of private roles do not experience conflicts between the different private claims of husband, wife, child, parent. But in addition to such conflicts as these, performers of public roles experience, and have to resolve, conflicts between private claims as such and the public claim of their public role, whatever it is.

And not only is there an almost inevitable conflict between public claims as such and private claims as such; there will be conflicts stemming from the fact that organizations are often nested, a smaller inside of a larger, and that larger one inside of a still

larger. If the interests of the nested organizations are not identical -- and they seldom are -- the performer of a public role in anyone of these nested organizations in some sense has a role in all the others, to all of which he owes a prima facie duty. Consider a U.S. Senator weighing his differential prima facie duties to his state, to the Senate itself, to the nation, and to the UN, not to mention his prima facie duty to his family. This greatly complicates life for performers of public roles, and is sometimes felt as a heavy burden, so heavy that many people seek to avoid it, either by opting out of public roles so far as possible or else by treating their public roles as if they did not differ in any way from private ones.

(3) Public roles are impersonal in a sense that is well represented by the way two bureaucrats may negotiate by an exchange of correspondence, a procedure that reduces the chance that idiosyncracies of style or of personality traits might affect the outcome in unpredictable ways, i.e., ways that defeat the expectations for the roles. Impersonality characterizes performance not only at lower level in an organizational hierarchy, but at least to some extent at the highest levels of public roles, where, as we have seen, some idiosyncratic role playing is expected. A president negotiating with a prime minister certainly takes account of the individual personality traits of the other, but he does so to gain a tactical advantage, not because he loves his opposite number.

Thus we judge the interactions of people we think of as performing public roles by very different standards from those we apply to the interactions of people we think of as performing private

roles, condemning in the one precisely those modes of negotiation which we approve in the other. And note that the standards are so different for the two kinds of roles that we resist using the term "negotiation" to describe approved modes of interaction between husbands and wives, friends and lovers, inasmuch as this term suggests an arms-length calculating stance which is inappropriate for performers in private roles.

(4) Public roles are impersonal in still another way. The ideal-typical performer of a public role allocates rewards and punishments, promotions and demotions, in strict accordance with criteria that are applicable across the board, uninfluenced by his personal feelings, whether favorable or hostile, toward the persons concerned. This way of behaving is inappropriate in private roles and is rightly condemned there. In private roles it is right that love, concern, pity, as much as merit and demerit determine how rewards are distributed, and often right, too, that deserved penalties be foregone. Conduct that would be called "favoritism" or "nepotism" -- pejorative terms these -- in public roles is morally right in private roles.

(5) Public roles are planned; private roles grow. Further, public roles are designed with a view to the maintenance and improvement of the organization in which these roles are intended to function. Performance in a public role is therefore judged by the extent to which that performance contributes to the goals of the organization in question. The motives and attitudes of a performer of a public role are therefore largely irrelevant, except so far as they

affect his ability to perform well in the role.

At the lower levels in any organization -- janitor, aircraft maintenance man, assembly line worker -- roles are defined in great detail. What is expected of performers in such roles -- what they ought to do -- is to carry out the prescribed behaviors punctiliously: theirs not to reason why, theirs to get on with the job. At the upper levels of an organization -- corporation president, chief of staff -- where only the goals are defined (and then only in very broad terms) and the means are left largely open, what is expected of the performer is sound decision, i.e., correct cost/benefit calculation. Does one, or doesn't one, manage to get there fustest with the mostest?

This is the basis for appeals to raison d'état, a phrase that has a bad name, not only because it is French but because unscrupulous rulers have so often used it to justify purely selfish conduct. But misuse should not discredit a practice that all office holders have always adopted. Lord Grey, the Whig prime minister who steered the Reform Bill successfully through Parliament, was only being more frank than most politicians when he remarked, "No one admires the grand principles of morality more than I do, but great nations cannot be guided by these rules." Grey could just as well have been speaking of the managers of any large organizations; there is nothing especially distinctive about great states. What he meant by "the grand principles of morality" was presumably something like the Kantian categorical imperatives. He was saying that these imperatives apply -- if indeed they ever apply -- only in the domain of private morals. A prime minister, he was saying, cannot afford the luxury of never

telling a lie, never breaking a promise. He has to do the best he knows how to do for his country.

Everybody -- everybody, that is, except Kantians and other moral purists -- agrees that something like the raison d'état principle operates in the domain in public morality. Everybody -- except the most cynical of Machiavellians -- agrees that the raison d'état principle does not exempt performers of public roles from any and all consideration of the kinds of prima facie duties that predominate in the domain of private morality. Everybody agrees that behavior that would be acceptable in public roles is unacceptable if it occurs in private roles; we call it "heartless" when it occurs. Everybody agrees that behavior that would be acceptable in private roles is inappropriate in public roles; we call it "sentimental." But when we get down to specific cases, nonterminating disagreements are likely to develop. Was McNamara ruthless in ordering area bombing in Vietnam and the wholesale uprooting of villagers? or was he performing a distasteful job as well as he knew how? Was Carter sentimental in risking a general war for the sake of the 52 hostages? or was he a noble humanitarian?

In some cases the distinction between public and private roles is clear-cut. Everyone agrees that there is a distinction between Eisenhower as president and Eisenhower as husband. Even those who think that he should not have lied to Khrushchev about the U-2 overflights will surely allow that this lie was on a different footing from any lie he may have told Mamie, supposing he had anything to lie about, regarding his relation with Kay Summersby. To hold that the

President of the U.S. should not lie to the first secretary of the Communist Party USSR is to treat a public role as if it were a private one. One can say -- and rightly say -- that Eisenhower should not have allowed himself to be maneuvered into the position where he had to make this choice. But the only relevant question about his lie to Khrushchev was whether, in the awkward circumstances in which he found himself, a lie exposed would damage the U.S. more than the truth admitted. What is called for is a calculation of comparative costs. But calculations about the chances of exposure, were he to lie to Mrs. Eisenhower, would have been inappropriate, and the lie, had he indeed lied, would have been wrong even if he hoped thereby to spare her pain. For, though one certainly wants a friend or lover to be faithful, one would rather know him to be unfaithful, if he is, and forgive him if one can, than be party to a fraudulent relationship.

But most actions do not fall so neatly into either the public or the private domain. What, for instance, about (possible) lies to Macmillan, instead of to Khrushchev? to John Foster Dulles instead of to Mrs. Eisenhower? In such cases the behaviors have both public and private features, and different people, attending to different aspects of the performance, will reach different conclusions about whether Eisenhower ought not to have lied. Some will recall that Eisenhower and Macmillan were long-time friends; others will regard this relationship as irrelevant in view of the fact that Macmillan was now prime minister.

That is to say, some people assimilate the Macmillan and the Dulles cases -- perhaps even the Khrushchev case -- to the Mamie case.

Others assimilate the Dulles and Macmillan cases — and possibly even the Mamie case -- to the Khrushchev case. These differences correspond to the shift in perspective (already noted), as a result of which marriages that Jane Austen and Trollope praised as "sound" are nowadays assimilated to marriages that they and we alike deplore.

Why do such perspectival differences occur? The answer seems to be that people differ temperamentally -- "attitudinally" might be a better word — and that these difference in temperament or attitude affect the way they look at social roles and so their moral assessment of performance in these roles.

Some people, that is to say, feel comfortable only in relatively well-defined relationships with others (they like to "know where they stand"). Loose and fluid relationships not only seem to them to be wasteful and inefficient; such relationships generate a considerable amount of cognitive dissonance. Such people prefer to maintain a distance — psychic and even physical — from the people with whom they interact -- actio ad distans is their motto. Further, they like to organize problems systematically, dividing them into their components and dealing with each of these in turn. Other people, in contrast, feel comfortable only in informal relationships. Situations that the first group find congenial, are felt by these people to be stiff, empty, and "unnatural." So far from preferring to tackle a problematic situation from outside, these people want to know how it looks to those with whom they are interacting. Empathy, not observation, seems to them the route to successful problem solving, and calculation puts them "out of tune and harsh."

Clearly, the first sort of temperament will perform best in public roles; the second, in private roles. And when people with the first sort of temperament find themselves in private roles they are likely to perform in these roles as if they were public — for instance, they may adopt an arms-length attitude toward a spouse or a child, treating him/her almost as they would business rivals. And the second group, who perform best in private roles are likely to make the same sort of mistake, but in the opposite direction, assuming that they can have the same sort of easy relationship with their employees that they have with an old college chum.

The conditions of modern life, playing on these differences in temperament and exaggerating them, have resulted in strongly bipolarized expectations for many roles. Some people seem to respond to large-scale organizations, urbanization, and anomie by externalizing more and more roles. Thus the role of physician, which was once largely private (the Victorian physician who helped his dying patient across the threshold and supported the survivors in their grief is no fiction), has now become largely depersonalized, more public than many public roles. Meanwhile, in contrasting reaction to these same features of twentieth century culture, other people personalize roles that were formerly regarded as public: corporation executives go to great pains to be liked by their employees, parents want to be friends with their children, and deans never think of imposing fines on student offenders.

When role expectations are strongly bipolarized, some people will view a particular role as public and so apply public criteria to

the evaluation of performance in that role, while others, viewing that same role as private, apply private criteria to it. Thus nonterminating disagreements regarding the morality of many actions are inevitably generated. Hence, though one hopes that an analysis like this, by emphasizing the ways in which the criteria for public and private roles differ, will reduce moral disagreements, it would be naive to expect to eliminate them altogether. For people may agree that different criteria are appropriate for public and private roles, and even agree about what these different criteria are, and yet still differ about the locus of a particular role on the spectrum of roles that I described at the outset.

IV

The Divestiture Controversy

Should trustees of colleges and universities divest themselves of stock in companies doing business in South Africa? or only of stock in companies with South African subsidiaries? or only of stock in companies doing business with the South African government? or only of stock in companies supplying military equipment to that government which it might use against Black liberation movements? Or should trustees ignore all such considerations and concentrate on investing in such a way as to maximize return on the portfolio, in accordance with the prudent man rule?

Opinions range over the whole spectrum of possibilities, but while some trustees advocate a policy of divestment and some students and faculty members advocate a policy of return maximization, the

central tendency of trustee opinion and the central tendency of student-faculty opinion are strongly bipolarized.¹⁹ An immense amount of talk has been generated, but it has produced more heat than light, for much of the talk on both sides is less an attempt to decide what is right than to defend an entrenched position and to browbeat opponents into going along.

I hope that the concepts discussed in the first three sections of this paper will encourage a more rational, and less rhetorical, approach to this question, and I shall begin by considering the divestiture case in the context of our discussions (in Section I) of the varied kinds of circumstances in which moral problems arise.

(1) It is possible that some trustees here and there encounter the divestiture question as the problem of deciding which of two *prima facie* duties is the weightier. For instance, a trustee might have promised a fellow trustee or the president of his institution that he would vote one way on this issue and then come to believe that the course of action he has agreed to is wrong — he is in the same position as the member of a tenure review committee who feels a personal obligation to an unsuitable candidate. But such cases are probably rare: for the typical trustee the divestiture question does not arise in this kind of context.

(2) It is possible that the divestiture question may appear to some trustees as a conflict between duty and interest. A trustee might, for instance, have a large personal interest in a company doing business in South Africa and also believe that the college ought to sell its stock in the company. Alternatively, a trustee might so

loathe the racial policies of the South African government that he is eager to divest, and yet believe that divestment is incompatible with a prudent investment policy. But cases of this kind are probably exceptional; the divestiture question does not typically arise in this context.

(3) Some trustees may feel that the divestiture question is a conflict between their role as trustee and some moral principle — for instance, the principle that aid and comfort should never be extended to iniquitous governments anywhere in the world. Since, I have said, I believe this way of describing the problem trustees face is best described in terms of case (4) or case (5), I will move on to these cases.

(4) Until quite recently it was possible for trustees to believe that the role of trustees regarding management of college endowments is well defined. There was general agreement that trustees are expected to maximize income within the limits of the prudent man rule. If they did that, they had done all that was expected of them and all that they expected of themselves; it was not only permissible, it was right, to ignore all other considerations as irrelevant. Though an occasional trustee may have asked himself whether all other considerations really are irrelevant, most trustees would have regarded such trustees as over scrupulous.

All that has now changed. Given the amount of talk that the divestiture question has generated, it does not take very sensitive antennae for trustees to conclude that they need to take another look. What once seemed obvious — that the prudent man rule was an adequate

guide — now seems doubtful. Because society at large no longer speaks with a unanimous voice regarding its expectations for the ways trustees handle the investments for which they are responsible, investment policy has slipped into a vagueness band.

(5) It would seem, then, that for the typical trustee the divestiture question is like the problem middle-class parents face regarding how far to go in trying to protect their teenage daughters from sexual adventures and all the other moral problems that arise in periods of rapid cultural change. Trustees, like parents of teenage daughters, do not lack guidance; they have more guidance than they know what to do with. For trustees the guidance comes in the form of proposed modulations of their investment policy. The modulations are all designed to take account of (that is, adjust investment policy to) features of the social environment that their critics feel trustees have overlooked. But "overlooked" is not the right word: To the critics these features are so obvious and so important that to them trustees seem deliberately obtuse. To trustees, however, these features are either less important or else counterbalanced by features of the environment that their critics in their turn have overlooked or minimized.

How can such differences in perception occur? I believe they are due in part to the kinds of temperamental, or attitudinal, differences described at the end of Section III. Today's students are in many respects the inheritors of the sixties. Though hippy-dropout, Vietnam protests, sit-ins, flower children, zen, and many of other phenomena of that time may have largely have disappeared, much of the

mentality that was common to them has survived — for instance, a hostility to large organizations. Inasmuch as roles in large organizations are prototypical of public roles, hostility to large organizations has easily been transferred to public roles of all kinds.

Young people, then, are likely to be found among those whose temperament leads them to assimilate public roles to private ones. Since they do not discriminate between public and private roles, they expect people to perform in all roles as if these roles were private. When these expectations are disappointed — because the performers distinguish, as their critics do not, between public and private roles — these performers are perceived as having done what they ought not to have done and to have left undone what they ought to have done. They are morally condemned for performances which, from their own point of view, are morally praiseworthy because these performances conform to their own expectations for the role.

In contrast, trustees, both by reason of temperament and of experience, may be inclined to assimilate all roles to public roles. Many, perhaps most, trustees are corporation executives and directors; those who are lawyers are typically members of large firms — men and women of affairs. They may, therefore, perceive their role as trustees of educational institutions on the model of the institutions they know best. For instance, it is certainly the job of trustees to maximize income from investments, but it is their job to do so within limitations that are not applicable to purely profit-making institutions. Trustees who assimilate their role in academic

institutions to their role as directors of corporations are likely to go as far wrong — in the opposite direction — as are students who assimilate the role of trustee to that of a private person who can invest just as he chooses. Thus, the difficult problem for trustees of deciding what changes, if any, to make in their investment policy is exacerbated by perspectival differences between their role expectations for themselves and students' role expectations for them.

In the remainder of this paper I shall examine some of the typical modulations in investment policy that have been proposed, with a view to showing why trustees and students look at these proposals so differently. I do not expect this discussion to resolve the issue. I only hope to clarify a bit for the disputants what it is that they are disputing about. By defining the issue more narrowly it may be possible to replace muddled disagreement, which always raises temperatures, with focused disagreement, which, sometimes at least, lowers them.

But first, before turning to the proposed modulations, it may be helpful to make a general observation about reactions to vagueness bands. As I pointed out earlier, people respond differentially, with greater or less anxiety, when the choice they have to make lies within a region in which their role is not well defined. This is doubtless a matter of individual difference, but, generally speaking, vagueness bands are more productive of anxiety for trustees than are the vagueness bands that exist in many public roles. In the first place, trustees tend to be cautious people — they would not be chosen as trustees if they were not thought to be cautious. In the second

place, people who might not be particularly cautious in running their own businesses or managing their own affairs are likely to be cautious when they perform as trustees. They have nothing to gain personally, and much to lose, if some acts of theirs whose moral character is at present undefined, are subsequently defined, by law or by public opinion, as impermissible for trustees, instead of as a part of their whole duty as trustees. This tendency toward caution is reinforced by the fact that many trustees are lawyers and by trustees' uneasy awareness that we are living in a litigious age.

It is natural, then, for trustees to resist efforts on anybody's part -- whether students or faculty members or, for that matter, fellow trustees -- to dislodge them from areas where expectations are well established and into areas where expectations are mixed. This is precisely one of the features of trustee performance for which students are likely to feel contempt. Since private roles are not tied to institutional goals and performance in them is therefore not judged by the extent to which it furthers these goals, private roles are irresponsible -- carefree save for the role player's personal responsibilities toward his opposite number in the dyadic relation. To the extent that students, failing to understand or willfully ignoring the difference between public and private roles, assimilate the former to the latter, behavior that appears to trustees to show a proper sense of responsibility is viewed by students as at best stuffy conservatism, at worse sheer cowardice.

(1) What I have been saying about trustee dislike of vagueness bands and preference for well defined expectations, applies of course

generally. But its relevance to the divestiture controversy is plain. As long as trustees do not change their investment policy, they have not entered the vagueness band -- they may be hovering on the edge, but they are not yet in it. But as soon as they adopt any one of the divestiture proposals, even the most modest, they will have moved into a zone of uncertainty regarding expectations for the management of institutional investments. They cannot know what they will find in Pandora's box nor whether, when they have opened it, they can get it closed again.

Once trustees have been nudged, or dragged reluctantly, into the vagueness band, they have to decide where in that band to draw the line between the kinds of investments they feel justified in making and those they reject as unacceptable. Everybody -- except the most left-wing of students -- agrees that investment in the so-called American free enterprise system is appropriate. Everybody agrees that investment in bordellos or in operations like the Mafia are inappropriate, no matter how large the total return may be. Most people agree that it would be appropriate (if it were also prudent) to invest in the UK, even though race riots occur there. Many people agree that it is appropriate to invest in Chile and Argentina, even though many Americans dislike the record of those countries on civil liberties.

On which side of the line distinguishing permissible from impermissible investments does the UK fall? Is it more like South Africa or more like the Mafia? Without clear guidelines from courts or from public opinion, these are not easy questions to answer. This

explains the attraction to many trustees of the Sullivan formula.²⁰ It appeals to trustees less perhaps because they view it as "reasonable" than because, if it takes on, investment decisions regarding companies doing business in South Africa will become routinized; they will have been removed from the vague band.

(2) Other modulations concern, not what stocks, to sell, but how to dispose of those that are to be sold. Heretofore, when the investment committee of a board decided, for whatever reason, to eliminate some holding from its portfolio, it simply instructed its brokers to sell, and was the end of it. That will not be the end of it if student opinion has its way. Student opinion not only wants the sales to be made; it wants them made with fanfares and trumpets. It wants maximum publicity for the sales because it wants to use them to influence policy -- the policy of U.S. corporations and of the U.S. government and, ultimately, the policy of the South African government.

It would miss the students' point to argue that the holdings of American educational institutions are too small for sales to have an effect. Student opinion is proposing that education institutions as represented by their boards of trustees become lobbies -- whether successful or unsuccessful lobbies is beside the point. This would be, from trustees' points of view, a very large modulation of their role expectations. It is not the case of course that boards of trustees never lobby. On the contrary, boards are expected to lobby on matters directly affecting their institutions. Boards that did not lobby against legislation that would abolish the deduction for

charitable giving would be accused -- and rightly accused -- of neglecting their duty. But the proposed modulation calls for an institution's trustees to lobby in a matter that certainly does not affect that institution directly, and does not even affect it indirectly, except in the way and to the extent that it affects all people everywhere.

Trustees, as we have seen, like to have lines drawn that will provide guidance for them and so diminish their responsibility. They are bound to ask where, if they lobby against South African racial policy, they are to draw the line that defines permissible lobbying from impermissible, or imprudent, lobbying. If they have a duty to lobby against South Africa have they also a duty to lobby against Chile and Argentina? The wider the domain in which lobbying is expected of trustees (i.e., is regarded as a duty), the more likely they are to expose their institution to retaliation from those who favor the policies that the trustees have lobbied against.

(3) Trustees are likely to want to calculate the costs and benefits to their institution of this and other proposed modulations of their role, and in making these calculations they are likely to take seriously the risk to their institution attendant on their descending from the ivory tower and tiptoeing into the political arena. Trustees take this risk seriously because, once again, they are responsible if something goes wrong; it is they who will be blamed. Students, who are not responsible if something goes wrong, are likely to weigh the risk as low, if they weigh it at all. But the chief issue between trustees and students is not a difference in the

outcome of two calculations; it is a difference of opinion as to whether calculation is appropriate in this kind of situation.

In the view of trustees it is their duty to calculate as best they can, about all matters that come before them for decision: That, to them, is what doing the best they can for their institution means. From their point of view, the proposal to expand their role as trustee to include lobbying against corporations doing business in South Africa merely introduces a new and difficult-to-measure item into their calculations. Since trustees are on the whole risk-averse and since they can have little confidence in the results of this calculation, they are likely to resist the proposed modulation.

To students this manner of approaching the issue is fundamentally wrong-headed. To them calculation with respect to a moral issue is unseemingly. Because they can, and do, take a high moral stand in their own private roles they see no reason why trustees should not take a high moral stand in their public role. That is to say, once again they assimilate public roles to private roles.

(4) Another sign of this assimilation is the students' preference for the term "divest" to describe what they want educational institutions to do. "Sell" is an ordinary, everyday, run-of-the-mill word; "divest" is a very high class word, with connotations of cleansing, purifying, and laying bare. Divest! divest! has much the tonal quality of repent! repent! In both cases the kingdom of heaven is just around the corner, its coming only delayed by the intransigence of a handful of stubborn sinners.

Though students certainly hope that an educational lobby will have a salutary effect on corporations, they also believe that publicized sale of the corporations' stock will have a salutary effect on the sellers; it will be like public confession, good for the institutional soul. In a word, disposing of the stock is prized by them as a symbolic gesture, as well as a likely cause of a change in the behavior of corporation. And symbolism, as we have seen, is a characteristic feature of behavior in the private domain, not the public domain.²¹ It is as if the students are trying to speak across the public domain -- that is, across the many political, economic and social institutions that separate them -- directly to the Blacks in South Africa.

Symbolic gestures lose some of their value as symbols if the gesturer gains by making them; a gesture is especially valuable when one loses by making it. Then and only then can those to whom it is made be sure that the gesturer's heart is pure. Hence students are untouched by the argument sometimes put forward, that selling the stock would cause a decline in the return on the portfolio. Trustees would regard a decline as a serious matter if they really believed that losses would be likely. But students want the portfolio to suffer -- not too much, of course, and doubtless not in ways that would affect them personally! No wonder, then, that a meeting of minds is difficult.

Given such differences in perspective as these it is not surprising that students and trustees fail to understand each other. If we were all as rational as the Cartesian cogito we would, all of

us, trustees and students alike, draw a firm distinction between the things a member of an organization may do -- indeed, in certain circumstances, ought to do -- as an individual and the things he may do -- indeed, in certain circumstances ought to do -- as a representative of the organization. A trustee who is convinced of the iniquity of the South African government could, as a private individual (for he is a private individual as well as a trustee), take the same high line that students take in theirs. It would be right for the trustee, if he chose, to sell the stock in his own portfolio of any companies doing business in South Africa, and to sell it without calculating costs, if he chose, simply because he loathed the policy of the South African government. And that would be quite consistent with his believing that, in his role as trustee, he ought to calculate and then deciding to vote against selling the same stock in the institution's portfolio, because the result of the calculation indicated that the likely costs to the institution exceeded likely benefits to Blacks in South Africa.

And so too for the matter of lobbying. In this country every citizen has a right to express his views on foreign policy to his government and to try to change that policy to conform to his view of what it should be. And no one would deny that citizens have a right to combine in order to do this more effectively. An individual who happens to be a trustee does not lose this right because he is a trustee, but he doesn't necessarily have this right as trustee. Any trustee who chooses to do so can join forces with like-minded students to lobby for a change in U.S. policy towards South Africa. Indeed,

there could be a lobby in which all the trustees, and only the trustees, of some institution were members. Though the membership of such a lobby would be identical with the membership of the board, the lobby would not be speaking for the institution; each member of the lobby would be speaking as an individual not as a trustee.

It would be difficult, of course, to prevent a lobby so constituted from being identified with the board of that institution: what is a firm distinction for the Cartesian cogito is eroded in the comings and goings of everyday life, and even the trustees themselves might forget whether they had assembled as trustees or as private lobbyists. But the distinction is worth noting, for the test ought to be how likely it is that the individual lobbyists will be perceived -- and slip into perceiving themselves -- as representatives of the organization with which they are connected.

Generally speaking, the higher a slot is in an organizational hierarchy, the more difficult it is to make a firm distinction between the public and private roles of any individual occupying that slot. This is why it would be difficult for a group of trustees to lobby as individuals. But student slots are much lower in the institutional hierarchy, and the occupiers of these slots are four-year transients. It ought to be possible therefore for the students at some institution to organize a lobby which would not be taken to represent that institution, and it would be possible if the students did not act as if they were representing the institution. That they do so is again partly a result of their assimilation of public roles to private roles -- they ignore the relation, fundamental to public roles and wholly

absent in private roles, between representation and responsibility. Though this is perhaps true of most students, some positively want to be taken as representing the institution, since this, as they think, gives their lobby more leverage. It can thus happen that a group of student activists, a small minority of the student body, take over some all-student organization and then presume to speak not only for this organization but for the institution itself.

What the trustees of such institutions face is a very profound proposed modulation of their role as trustees, which has nothing to do, specifically, with their role as investors in companies doing business in South Africa. What is being proposed -- it isn't at all clear how many of the proposers are fully aware of what they are proposing -- is a change in the role of trustees from being in some sense the "owners" of the institution -- the ultimate source, that is, of authority -- to being the servants of a large and vaguely defined constituency, students, faculty, alumni, the public -- all those who have an interest in the institution. Trustees would no longer represent the institution, which, as long as they are its owners, means in effect representing their collective view of the best interest of the institution. Instead, they would reflect the will of this indefinitely large constituency -- its view of the interest of the institution -- so far as they can ascertain what that view is. The problem of trustees would thus be transformed into the problem of legislators everywhere, the problem of whether to represent their constituents' interests or to reflect their constituents' wishes.

Of all the modulations I have discussed this is by far the largest, but since it is as yet only a small cloud on the horizon, I shall return in conclusion to the more immediate and by no means trivial problem of investment in companies doing business in South Africa. It is easy, in this connection, to remind trustees and students that what a trustee does as an individual is one thing and what he does as a trustee is another, and such a reminder may possibly reduce the area of disagreement. Unfortunately, to tell trustees that the criteria appropriate in private roles are quite different from those appropriate in public roles does not go very far in helping them decide how to vote on the divestiture question. The divestiture question is not unique; it differs in no way from the problematic of moral choice everywhere. The students are proposing a change in investment policy to the trustees because they see something in the trustees' environment that the trustees themselves may not have noticed, but which the students view as important. This is always the function of a proposed modulation: to bring into focus something in the environment that is relevant to role performance but that has not yet been taken into account by performers in that role.

One specific function of student indignation at Afrikaans treatment of Blacks is to make trustees, who are perhaps hardened, by reason of age and experience, to injustice everywhere, aware of how iniquitous Afrikaans policy is. Another function is to remind trustees that educational institutions differ in important ways from banks and business corporations.

It is one thing, of course, to be brought to attend to features of one's environment one may have overlooked; it is another thing to know how to weigh them. Trustees will not fail to note that the change in their environment to which their attention is being called is not a change in the policy of the South African government but a fairly recent change in students' attitudes toward a long-time South African policy. This being the case, trustees will wonder whether the intensity of student indignation at injustice in South Africa reflects only the passions of youth. At the same time they are bound to ask themselves whether their own perhaps cooler reaction reflects the rigidities of age. They would like to know whether the changes in their environment that are being brought to their attention are the wave of the future or only an ephemeral ripple. They do not want to be a King Canute resisting a wave; they do not want to be stampeded by a ripple.

It is hard to be a trustee. But then it is hard to be a moral agent. If one could either look into the future or else wait for the long run, one could always be assured of doing the right thing. But one cannot look into the future, and in the long run even trustees are dead. Like all moral agents everywhere, trustees will have to make up their own minds, trying to be sensitive -- but not too sensitive -- to whatever other moral agents bring to their attention, and knowing that the best anyone can do at any time is to do the best that one can do at that time.

FOOTNOTES

1. This is the theme of James Gould Cozzens' By Love Possessed.
2. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Section VII, Part II.
3. Ibid.
4. Book III, 11, 870-90.
5. I owe this example to John F. Benton's as yet unpublished paper, "Written Records and the Development of Systematic Feudal Relations," pp. 6-7. It is interesting to note that Duke William apparently agreed with Roger's assessment of the relative importance of his two roles. Though William at first banished Roger from Normandy, he called Roger's treatment of Ralph "handsome and proper," and restored Roger's honors.
6. I owe this terminology to W. D. Ross (in The Right and the Good). Ross of course would have rejected with horror the notion, put forward here, that prima facie duties are generated by expectations.
7. Romans, 7:8-20, 24.
8. See above, pp. 6-7.
9. There is a close relationship between this matter of trying to be scrupulous without being overscrupulous and the concept of

"satisficing." See for instance recent papers (SSWP 363 and 381) by Louis Wilde and Alan Schwartz. I am not sure, however, whether these economic models are relevant to the individual decider dealing with the real-life problems he faces in his public and private roles. This may be one of the marks that distinguishes ethic from economics. It would seem that whatever is scientific about what used to be called "moral science" has been absorbed into economics, leaving the unscientific remainder to the care of philosophy.

10. What are called (collectively and loosely) the media are powerful forces, muting these divergent voices and flattening out expectations to a dull least common denominator. The soaps, the Mary Worths, the Dear Abbys encourage an oversimplified uniformity of response by ignoring everything that makes each case at least a bit different from every other. This certainly has the advantage of reducing, or altogether eliminating, the anxiety of the anxious, but the cost is heavy: the moral life is made less moral by making it less problematic.
11. Emma, vol. III, ch. vii.
12. Remembrance of Things Past, 2:259-60, 1022.
13. The Claverings, Ch. xxii.
14. "Relevance" is a word that calls out for analysis. Clearly, a modulation that introduces more coherence into experience -- that eliminates inconsistencies and so reduced cognitive dissonance --

is relevant. But this is a topic that requires another paper.

15. Mr. Justice Bazelon's recent address at the 1981 annual meeting of the American Psychological Association is a good example of the way a modulation can start. Relying on his long experience hearing cases in which psychological "experts" testify, the judge discussed what he called the "sins" of the profession: a tendency to make "conclusory pronouncements," a failure to "expose the facts under their conclusions" and "the values underlying their choice of facts," and a failure to "come clean on the uncertainties of opinion that may exist. . . ." The fact that extensive excerpts from the address have been printed in the APA Monitor, (vol. 12, no. 10) shows that this modulation is beginning to spread, though it is far from clear that it will eventually take on.
16. Eth. Nic., 1109a 26-27, 1109b 22-23.
17. In an important essay, "Ruthlessness in Public Life" (Moral Questions, pp. 75-90), Thomas Nagel has distinguished between what he calls "concern with what will happen" and "concern with what one is doing." As I see it, the latter sort of concern is predominant in private roles, the former in public roles.
18. K. Vorlander, Immanuel Kant (Meiner, Leipzig, 1924), 2:331.
19. In the following discussion I will use the term "student" as a convenient shorthand to refer to the whole group of which students probably form the majority but which also includes many

faculty members and some trustees. Similarly, as regards the term "trustee."

20. The Sullivan formula, so-called because it was worked up by the Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, a director of General Motors, consists of a set of six "principles" that define equal employment practices for U.S. companies doing business in South Africa. More than a hundred firms have accepted these principles and agreed to report regularly on their progress in putting them into effect.
21. Of course symbolic behaviors occur in connection with the performance of many public roles — for instance, swearing-in ceremonies, donning a black cap, saluting the flag. But such symbolic behaviors function in a very different way from the way in which symbolic behaviors function in private roles. So far from now being expressive of the inner attitudes of those making these gestures, the gestures have been transformed in the course of time into ritualized elements in a means/end nexus.